

## Beaumont - Port Arthur, Texas



Map 1: Beaumont-Port Arthur, Texas

### Area Profile

Sister cities of Beaumont and Port Arthur, Texas, northeast of Houston, on the border of Louisiana bore some of the most serious impacts of Hurricane Harvey. They are smaller, largely rural communities that [ [HYPERLINK "https://www.texastribune.org/2022/05/16/texas-harvey-disaster-aid-land-office/?utm\\_source=articleshare&utm\\_medium=social"](https://www.texastribune.org/2022/05/16/texas-harvey-disaster-aid-land-office/?utm_source=articleshare&utm_medium=social) ].

The population of the Beaumont-Port Arthur Metroplex is about 395,000 as of 2021. It's a majority minority area (42% Black, 32% Hispanic, and 18% White). The proportion of households without insurance in the area is estimated to be about 30%, significantly higher than the national average of about 10%. Nearly 25% of households there are living at or under the federal poverty level.

The area is home to an eclectic and vibrant community where classic Texas high school football reigns and has produced many professional sports stars like Bubba Smith and current Cowboys Coach Jimmy Johnson. Moreover, Beaumont-Port Arthur is the hometown of musician Janis Joplin, singer Clay Walker, and poet Mary Karr, among other artists.

The Spindletop oil discovery near Beaumont in 1901 made the area an oil and gas hub, with one of the nation's largest concentrations of refineries and petrochemical plants. Chemical production as well as energy and mining continue to be the primary economic drivers and are only growing.

## Risk Analysis

- Jefferson County and the city of Beaumont center, Census tract 117 have high [ HYPERLINK "<https://onemap.cdc.gov/portal/apps/sites/>" \ | "[/eji-explorer](https://onemap.cdc.gov/portal/apps/sites/)" ] rankings. Only 8% of census tracts in the nation have lower socio-economic indicator levels, and only 20% have more potentially hazardous and toxic sites.
- The Council on Environmental Quality's [ HYPERLINK "<https://screeningtool.geoplatform.gov/en/>" \ | "[9.28/30.1661/-94.1502](https://screeningtool.geoplatform.gov/en/)" ] shows that Beaumont and Port Arthur are overburdened, underserved, and disadvantaged.
- The [ HYPERLINK "<https://ephtracking.cdc.gov/Applications/ejdashboard/>" ] is 0.857, or the top 14% of all communities for negative environmental justice indicators.
- FEMA's National Risk Index shows a "Relatively High" rating for Jefferson County, TX when compared to the rest of the U.S. Nearly 99% of U.S. counties have a lower Risk Index and 97% of counties in Texas have a lower Risk Index, or Jefferson County is among the worst 2-3% of counties in the country from a risk perspective.
- [ HYPERLINK "<https://ejscreen.epa.gov/mapper/>" ] shows a dense concentration of EPA regulated facilities in green, particularly hazardous waste disposal sites and air pollution producing sites. The below image from EPA EJScreen shows the EPA regulated sites overlaid with medically underserved areas in yellow, and coastal flood hazard area in orange and red in Beaumont-Port Arthur area.



Figure 1: Jefferson County, Texas Showing EPA Regulated Facilities, Toxics Release Inventory, Medically Underserved Areas, and Coastal Flood Hazard, EJScreen

### Suggested Planning Partners

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### Resources

Assanie, L. (2018) Beaumont: At the Heart of Texas: Cities Industry Clusters Drive Growth. Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas. [ [HYPERLINK "https://www.dallasfed.org/research/heart/beaumont"](https://www.dallasfed.org/research/heart/beaumont) ]

CDC/ATSDR Environmental Justice Index (EJI) Explorer [ HYPERLINK  
"https://onemap.cdc.gov/portal/apps/sites/" \l "/eji-explorer" ]

CDC/ATSDR Social Vulnerability Index [ HYPERLINK  
"https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/placeandhealth/svi/index.html" ]

Census 2021: Quick Facts Beaumont City Texas, & Port Arthur City, Texas [ HYPERLINK  
"https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/beatmontcitytexas,portarthurcitytexas,US/PST045222"  
]

Council on Environmental Quality's [ HYPERLINK "https://screeningtool.geoplatform.gov/en/" \l  
"9.28/30.1661/-94.1502" ]

Despart, Z. (2022 May 16) New Texas plan for federal Hurricane Harvey aid yields same old result: Funds  
diverted away from Gulf Coast. Texas Tribune. [ HYPERLINK  
"https://www.texastribune.org/2022/05/16/texas-harvey-disaster-aid-land-  
office/?utm\_source=articleshare&utm\_medium=social" ]

EPA EJScreen [ HYPERLINK "https://www.epa.gov/ejscreen" ]

FEMA National Risk Index for Natural Hazards [ HYPERLINK "https://www.fema.gov/flood-  
maps/products-tools/national-risk-index" ]

### Area Profile

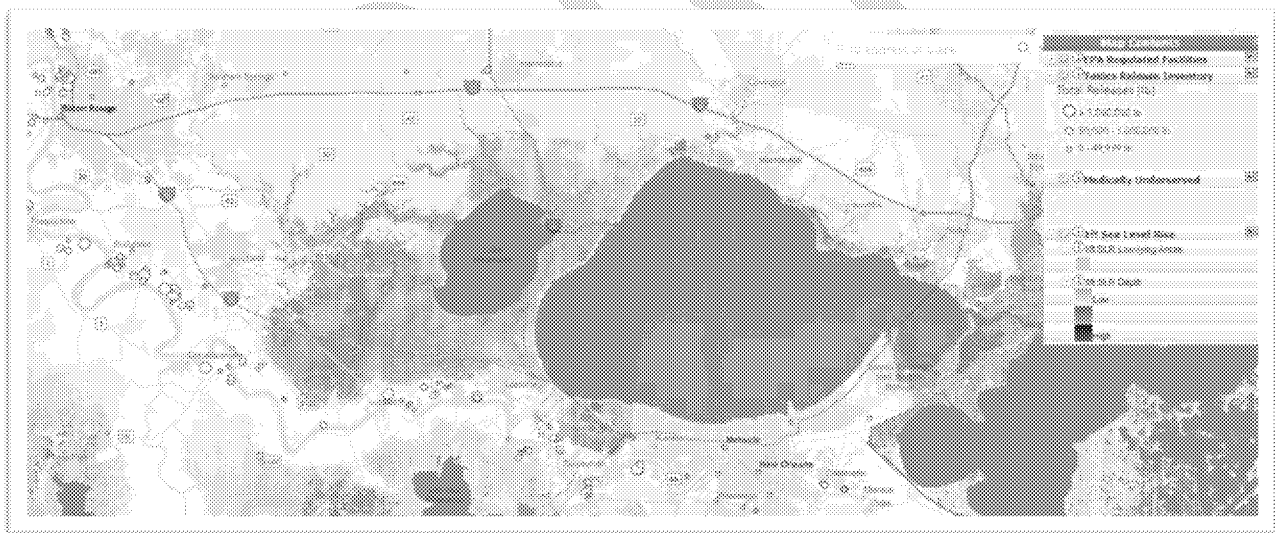
The area is culturally and historically significant, with Native archaeology and archaeology related to enslaved people and the history of slavery in the United States. The region has produced incredible musicians including Edgar Blanchard, Herb Hall, Doc Paulin, professional athletes like Terry Robiskie, and politicians like James Carville.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the area Iberville and St. James were largely sugar cane plantations. The current economy is based on chemical manufacturing and timber. Communities have widely critiqued the economic benefit to local community members due to concerns that the plants are not hiring people locally but instead are bringing in staff from outside.

## Risk Analysis

- FEMA's risk index is "relatively high" in East Baton Rouge and Jefferson parishes, and "very high" in Orleans parishes where expected annual losses are great, while the risk is lower in Ascension, Iberville, St. James, St. John the Baptist, and St. Charles.
- The CDC/ATSDR SVI shows high scores for East Baton Rouge, Iberville, and Orleans (among the worst 15-20% nationally), with the intermediate parishes faring slightly better.
- EPA's EJ Screen below overlays the location of EPA regulated facilities. The size of the green dot indicates the volume of toxic release, yellow indicates medically underserves areas, and the green and blues indicate areas that will be flooded by as little as 1 ft of sea level rise.

Figure 2: Mississippi Riverfront in Southern Louisiana Showing EPA Regulated Facilities, Medically Underserved areas, and Impact of 1 ft Sea Level Rise, EPA EJScreen



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## Resources

CDC/ATSDR Environmental Justice Index (EJI) Explorer [ [HYPERLINK](https://onemap.cdc.gov/portal/apps/sites/)

"[https://onemap.cdc.gov/portal/apps/sites/" \ "/eji-explorer](https://onemap.cdc.gov/portal/apps/sites/)" ]

CDC/ATSDR Social Vulnerability Index [ [HYPERLINK](https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/placeandhealth/svi/index.html)

"<https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/placeandhealth/svi/index.html>" ]

### Census 2021: Quick Facts

- St. John the Baptist Parish, St. James Parish, and Iberville Parish, LA [ [HYPERLINK](https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US,stjohnthebaptistparishlouisiana,stjamesparishlouisiana,ibervilleparishlouisiana/PST045222)  
"<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US,stjohnthebaptistparishlouisiana,stjamesparishlouisiana,ibervilleparishlouisiana/PST045222>" ]
- East Baton Rouge Parish & Orleans Parish, LA [ [HYPERLINK](https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/eastbatonrougeparishlouisiana,orleansparishlouisiana,US/PST045222)  
"<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/eastbatonrougeparishlouisiana,orleansparishlouisiana,US/PST045222>" ]
- Jefferson Parish, St. Charles Parish, & Ascension Parish, LA [ [HYPERLINK](https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/jeffersonparishlouisiana,stcharlesparishlouisiana,ascensionparishlouisiana,US/PST045222)  
"<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/jeffersonparishlouisiana,stcharlesparishlouisiana,ascensionparishlouisiana,US/PST045222>" ]

Council on Environmental Quality's [ [HYPERLINK](https://screeningtool.geoplatform.gov/en/) "[https://screeningtool.geoplatform.gov/en/" \ "/9.28/30.1661/-94.1502](https://screeningtool.geoplatform.gov/en/)" ]

EPA EJScreen [ [HYPERLINK](https://www.epa.gov/ejscreen) "<https://www.epa.gov/ejscreen>" ]

FEMA National Risk Index for Natural Hazards [ [HYPERLINK](https://www.fema.gov/flood-maps/products-tools/national-risk-index) "<https://www.fema.gov/flood-maps/products-tools/national-risk-index>" ]

## Citations

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Cole, L. W. (1992). Empowerment as the key to environmental protection: The need for environmental poverty law. *Ecology LQ*, 19, 619.

Davies, T. (2018). Toxic space and time: Slow violence, necropolitics, and petrochemical pollution. *Annals of the American Association of Geographers*, 108(6), 1537-1553.

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Maantay, J. (2001). Zoning, equity, and public health. *American journal of public health*, 91(7), 1033.

Singer, M. (2011). Down cancer alley: the lived experience of health and environmental suffering in Louisiana's chemical corridor. *Medical Anthropology Quarterly*, 25(2), 141-163.



Terrell, K. A., & James, W. (2022). Racial disparities in air pollution burden and COVID-19 deaths in Louisiana, USA, in the context of long-term changes in fine particulate pollution. *Environmental Justice*, 15(5), 286-297.

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